Subject: Hoard of Ceylonese coins made of bent wire

Dimand, Maurice S.

[Assoc. Curator, Near Eastern Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art]

February 10, 1932

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Dr. Maurice S. Dimand, Associate Curator
Near Eastern Art,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
New York City.

Dear Dr. Dimand:

I have been working on a large hoard of silver coins made of bent wire, from Ceylon. These pieces are stamped from dies most of which are cut in the regular manner with an engraving tool. I have, however, come across a few dozen pieces, some with very crude designs or crude attempts at lettering, etc., that give me the impression that the dies used to stamp these were not cut by an engraving tool but were etched. They are very shallow and the raised parts present an absolutely flat surface and the edges of these designs are very ragged, presenting exactly the appearance as if the design had been etched. Do you know if in the sixteenth and seventeenth century in India and especially in Ceylon the various local silver smiths could have employed this method of making their stamps to impress upon these wire coins? None of the coins were governmental but were made locally for trading purposes. I beg to remain,

Very truly yours,

HW:JG

Curator